

Subject: KENTA KOBASHI! and HIROSHI HASE! suplex the crap outta each other! MANO NEGRO JR! is the latest cool young punk in EMLL! YAMAZAKI! and TAKADA! beat the holy hell out of each other! and other stuff I saw or heard this week!

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #50!

It was a fatass week of wrestling viewing as I got to watch the rest of the Glenn Tape that I alluded to last week (for those of you with the special DVDVR WHOMP-ASS DECODER RING!! HAKEEBA!) and golly! was it chock full of SWANK WRESTLING ACTION! I also started watching more of the wad of swank wrestling that Doug sent and the stuff from 89 ROCKS way too hard. I started in on the History of Rings MAMMOTH tape from Rob Fuckin Newland, world's busiest man and all-aroundest goodest egg, but I haven't gotten past the Bill Kazmier match (HEY! RIGHT THERE! It's shootstyle... Bill.... Kazmier....) so it will be uncommented upon until next week, when I can hate Tamara some more and irritate John D Williams, world's biggest Tamara mark (tee-hee.:) I'm also gearing up for the big expedition to the WCW Houseshow in Fairfax- where Hangman Tim, Dave, Phil (and hopefully the other Phil) and I will pounce upon Jeremy and Cheetah (who I hear will be wearing GAB 89-era Sting make-up to counterpoint my wearing of the 90's Crow-style make-up.:p) and we all get to watch Eddy vs UD. I'M STOKED!

@@@@@ GRUPO REVOLUCION CHAMP FORUM 8/16/97

-This was a weird one as the green young anonymous punks of GR do six half decent impersonations of Ultimo Dragon- for obvious reasons- and have the best match on tape. I can see where Jericho and Lance Storm learned their highspots- hanging out with Ultimo, because they all do the same ones- Asai Moonsault variations, Quebradas, Springboard clotheslines and dropkicks to the floor, plus they all work stiffer than your average trainee, so there you have it. The future looks bright South of the Border. The Brazo de Oro/ El Brazo/Alacran Negro vs Tsubasa/Super Astro/Kendo was WAY too much Brazo's and Kendo trying to be all cute and shit and not enough Tsubasa and SuperAstro. KEndo has entered into my top ten list of most annoying wrestlers on earth- despite the boss tope. JUST WRESTLE, YOU CRETIN! He falls down trying to do a slick entrance into the ring and crawls out to the apron. I'm trying to figure out why Tsubasa is such the favored son of Grupo Revolucion- he's about as good as the other punks but he gets the cool mask and the big matches. Go figger. La Fiera/Emilio Charles Jr. vs Ultimo Dragon/Atlantis was pretty low impact. La Fiero and Atlantis kinda mailed it. UD tries to make it more memorable but can't muster the spark needed to make this anything special. Emilio Charles rounds out the cast.

\$\$\$\$\$CMLL CHAMP FORUM 8/23/97

-This is great! The first whole match on the tape is Ultraman Jr./Mano Negro Jr./Mr. Agira vs Archangel/(Glenn said) Futuro (but I thought I heard Cadaver Ultratumbo but I could be delirious)/Violencia and GOLLY! is this chock full of Young Lucha Punk Goodness! Mano Negro

Jr and Mr Aguila team up, yet battle it out to see who can do the most psychotic highspots with Mano Negro Jr actually winning by doing the somersault tope into the fifth row. The great thing about this youngster Son of Mano Negro is that he looks like he could develop into a legit heavyweight since he is already pretty big for a luchadore. Aguila and Negro also have the superfabulous Overly Enhance-Toprope Assisted- Illogically Fabulous Deuling Armdrags, with Aguila winning with the double springboard variation into a rana position into an armdrag. Mano was a close second with the more traditional One Hand Knucklelock run up the turnbuckle flyover into an armdrag. Ultraman Jr is pretty underrated as far as luchadores go, but he is as good as most other luchadores on the earth and he acquits himself well by not getting smoked by the youth phenomenons that he is tagging with- in that he also gets in some fantabulous highspots, but also had better mat work. Arkangel is SO the rudo great these days- sort of a new Murabunta: great worker, reels in the young punks when they get in over their head, and generates fabulous heat. Violencia is WAY on his way to achieving the same end. He is the future of rudos- bigger, fatter offense, but can sell and carry the flashy young punks through the match. He's tough as nails and can really work- maybe he is the underrated one of all the good ones in this match, since Violencia is ALWAYS in with the real big boys of EMLL, thus he is NEVER noticed. That other guy, whoever the hell he is, rounds out the cast.:)

The main event is about as Main Event as you can get. Shocker/Mr. Niebla/Super Astro vs Black Warrior/Rey Bucanero/Fellino rules the fuckin WORLD! Everybody but Bucanero (who IS good) could be in the running for Best Luchadore in the Face of the Earth as Soon as Silver King Retires Honors. Shocker is SO the shit. He is too AWESOME for mere words. Super Astro has an off match by the end. Black Warrior takes some Black Warrior-style bumps (the hiptoss over the toprope, double hell Jerry bump) and just kicks ass like he is wont to do. Niebla is insane. Felino is great blah, blah, blah. You know the drill. GET ALLLLLLLL THIS.

#####NEW JAPAN TV 8/23/97

This baby starts out with Fujita vs Don Frye in a UWF style worked shoot and GOD! does it KICK ASS! Frye is so built for this style and he is such a good old-fashioned American Dick that this is instantly a good feud with the boring, stoic and laconic Judo-Boy, Ogawa. Frye doesn't break holds when Fujita hits the ropes, he punches him in the face really hard, he threatens to kick Inoki's scrawny million year old ass, and is basically a total asshole heel in the best sense of the word. The crowd was going nuts, the wrestlers at ringside were aghast and I was digging it the MOST. This is gonna be WAYYY too much fun.

It gets even better with the El Samurai vs Takaiwa post-J-Crown match wherein Takaiwa and El Samurai continue their mutual trend of being in amazingly hellish and bone-crushing matches. This one takes the cake in terms of sheer c-4 crushing toprope moves. El SAMurai once again takes the most Gargantuan hard bump known to man as Takaiwa hits the toprope Death Valley Driver and kills El Samurai as much as the reverse hurricanrana kills him in the match against Kanemoto. El gets in the toprope DDT and reverses a superplex, but it doesn't make for the Endless Powerbomb (three real ones as opposed to the usual thing passed off as the Endless

Powerbomb) that goes directly into the MEANEST, MOST VICIOUS MICHINOKU DRIVER II I HAVE EVER SEEN. AND I'VE SEEN KAORU'S. This match kicked ass. I wanna see all of it.

Muta vs Steven Regal from G-1 was okay but short. Regal worked a whole and Muta layed around on his fat lazy ass and sucked all the goodness out of this. Regal rules. Muto sucks cocker spaniel.

Choshu/Kimura vs Fujinami/Kido was good in a low impact kinda way. Woo-hoo.

*****NEW JAPAN TV 8/30/97

-BOY! G-1 REALLY sucked this year if this highlight reel is any indication. It starts with Regal vs Kojima. Hey, I like Kojima as much as the next guy, but at least use both hands when doing a Diamond Cutter on Regal. Regal as Japan job-boy is irritating, considering he is better than all of them in this tourney.

Hirata vs Norton- short clip. Not good.

Yasuda vs Tenzan was actually pretty okay which shocked the hell out of me. Yasuda tried to work and Tenzan attempted to work so this wasn't as horrible as it should have been. Actually looked like Yasuda was gonna get the upset for a second there. Kinda AWA-ish, in a good way. Chono vs Ohara was okay because it was so short. Chono has the cast on his ankle and can't really do anything so Ohara goes for the ankle which kinda makes this less nauseating. Chono with some sort of submission. Muta vs Nakanishi- Muta tries to stab him. Neat. Try to wrestle you sorry sack of shit.

Hashimoto vs Yamazaki- This looked like it was one of the better matches of the tourney and even then it won't much. Yamazaki kicks the hell out of Hash for a while, Hash kicks Yamazaki back to set up the predictable finish.

Buff Bagwell vs Sasaki- This one pissed me off the most. Bagwell performs the miracle of dragging a decent match out of the thoroughly useless Sasaki, which is akin to dragging a good match out of the equally as useless Meng. Sasaki starts getting blown up so he stops selling and decides to take it home. Welcome to hell. BUFF rules the world. Sasaki doesn't. No. Not at all.

Kojima vs Tenzan- This was the best match of the tourney if the highlights are any indication. The steal liberally from a few Kanemoto/Samurai/Takaiwa endings and do a good finish with lots of nearfalls coming off cool looking top rope powermoves. Kojima makes up for the Regal debacle and Tenzan was actually bearable in this.

Norton vs Muta- Norton beats the shit out of Muta so I dug it.

Chono vs Hashimoto- Chono being hurt made this short, and the ankle of Chono precluded any kind of great match. Super-choice brainbuster at the end.

%%%%%ALL JAPAN TV 8/31/97

-This had the Hiroshi Hase vs Kenta Kobashi match that I figured would have sucked. I figured Hase wasn't in wrestling shape enough to look any good against Kobashi and that the match would be one of those forced things like all of Doc's matches these days. Luckily, I was wrong

and this match was really good. Hase basically worked it like a Mutoh-when-he-was-worth-a-shit match without the buckets of blood and replace it with skull crushing suplexes by Kobashi. Hase works on Kobashi's leg for a while to set up the figure four in-between trying to get assorted Northern Lights and Dragon Suplexes on Kobashi. I guess there is a New Japan Finisher theme going throughout Hase's offense in that he is countered from using everybody in New Japan's finishers by Kobashi using assorted All Japan finishers. I figured that explained the Tiger Driver 89 and all the other AJ suplexes du jour. All we needed was a Scorpion Deathlock and a Stretch Plum and that would have sealed it. Hase was great in this despite the goddam Giant Swing. His suplexes were beautiful and he was sufficiently vicious in working on Kobashi's leg. Kobashi was as great as usual- crushing Hase head with assorted suplexes, not being too much of a weenie, and selling Hase's suplexes like a champ. This was good, I wish Hase would have gone over. He can still go, it seems.

The Akiyama/Misawa vs Albright/Doc match was puzzling. Albright gets a clean pin on Misawa in 11 minutes? What the fudge? Doc looked better in this and Albright looked pretty spry, but they still suck at this point- especially when compared to Misawa and Akiyama. Doc busts up Akiyama for a while and that's kinda fun. Albright gets off some fab suplexes that Misawa sells like Misawa. A very baffling match. Far more baffling than good.

@@@@@ BEST OF JAPAN 1989

This baby, which I'm thinking is the Jeff Lynch comp, was REALLY great. I'll not dwell on all the great matches this week, but attempt to drag it out over a couple of weeks which will actually work this time because it's an eight hour tape and I'm not watching all of it at one time. I swear!:) The best thing so far has been the GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT Yamazaki vs Takada match where Yamazaki is as amazing as Takada and Takada is as amazing as he has ever been. The basic story is: Yamazaki is trying to kick the holy hell out of Takada while Takada is trying to suplex the holy hell out of Yamazaki. This is just awesome as Yamazaki hits multiple flurries of stiff- as-all-hell kicks directly to the mug of Takada. Takada counters the mountain of violence with his amazing quickness, his amazing suplexes and his innate coolness. Yamazaki and Takada jockey for position for submissions by beating the holy shit out of each other. They set up submission holds by kicking the lungs out of each other. They set up knock out blows by hitting the most Judo-related suplexes they can conjure. Yamazaki is so stiff and awesome by the end of this, when he is really kicking the fuck out of Takada, that I'm amazed he wasn't instantly summoned to wrestling Hercules at Mt Olympus. Takada, who has already achieved wrestling godhood, is more than up for the challenge. It really gets no better than this. This is just a great match.

NEXT WEEK: TSURUTA VS HANSEN! PROMDRESS AZTECA! OTANI VS EL SAMURAI!
RINGS! RINGS! ALL THE VOLK HAN THAT YOU CAN HANDLE! WOO-HOO!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, HASHIMOTOCIZED!!!

